

ARIZONA COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

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News Release

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Arizona Early Education Funds Establish Regional Partnerships

Phoenix – The first grants from the Arizona Early Education Funds (AEEF) have been approved by the AEEF Board of Directors to establish Regional Partnerships in six Arizona counties including Pinal, Apache, Maricopa, Coconino, Cochise, Graham/Greenlee, Santa Cruz and Yavapai.

The Regional Partnerships will invest in young children and their families at the local level and will focus on parent education, professional development, literacy, health and quality improvements in child care and preschool.

Arizona Early Education Funds have committed \$200,000 in funds to provide counties with technical assistance as they develop and continue building partnerships in their communities. An additional \$175,000 will be available to encourage communities to enhance relationships and to develop and implement strategies.

In addition to providing financial support, technical assistance will be offered based on individual community needs to help ensure success.

The Arizona Early Education Funds are a public/private partnership created to implement the Governor's Arizona School Readiness Board's Action Plan. These funds help communities across the state develop quality early education opportunities for children from birth to age five, a time which research has shown to be critical in a child's mental and social development.

The Arizona School Readiness Board Action Plan has identified 10 action steps to prepare families, schools, teachers and communities so all children in Arizona may begin first grade safe, healthy and ready to succeed.

The Arizona Early Education Funds are donor advised funds through the Arizona Community Foundation, a statewide philanthropy with four regional offices dedicated to connecting its donors' interests with community needs. For more information, visit the ACF website at www.azfoundation.org or call 602-381-1400.

-Grant Summary Follows-

Summary of AEEF Regional Partnership Grants

Coconino County – The Community Coalition for Early Education was awarded \$75,000 for community assessment and planning to:

- Expand its representation and extend its reach to additional communities in Coconino County.
- Help provide leadership training to the current council and to others who want to establish councils within their communities.
- Increase partnership depth and involvement.
- Complete a comprehensive description of the state of early childhood in Coconino County.

Santa Cruz County – More For Kids was awarded \$25,000 for capacity building including to:

- Begin building a partnership in Santa Cruz County where there are 3,333 children under age 5 and only four licensed child care centers of which only two are NAEYC accredited.
- Strengthen the partnership among identified organizations and leverage grant dollars with other sources to meet budget goals.

Northeastern Arizona – The Children and Family Alliance in Apache County was awarded \$25,000 for capacity building to:

- Help a strong, committed existing current partnership grow and strengthen services for young children in rural communities.
- Include Concho, St. Johns, Springville, Eager and outlining communities of Vernon, Alpine, Greer, The Blue and Nutrioso, demonstrating a historic working relationship with each of these small, rural communities.

The Blake Foundation in Cochise County was awarded \$25,000 for capacity building to:

- Hiring a Regional Partnership Coordinator dedicated to building and leading a strong partnership.
- Coordinating efforts throughout the county to assess assets and needs for growth.
- Include Benson, Bisbee, Douglas, Sierra Vista, Willcox and Tombstone where there are a total of 7,966 children under age 5 and nearly 3000 children living in poverty.

United Way of Pinal County was awarded \$75,000 for community assessment and planning to:

- Support a strong, committed five-year-old partnership and increase involvement and capacity within communities that are ready for the next steps of creating and enhancing early care and education programs for young children.
- Increase capacity in Pinal towns of Florence, Superior, Mammoth and Kearny, and Pinal cities of Apache Junction, Coolidge, Maricopa and Eloy and moving into non-annexed communities such as San Tan High, Anthem South and Arizona City.

Valley of the Sun in South Central Maricopa was awarded \$100,000 for program enhancement to:

- Enhance the current partnership which includes communities of Encanto, Maryvale, Downtown Phoenix, Sky Harbor, Willow, Coronado, Garfield, the City of Phoenix Enterprise Zone and 16 school districts.
- Leverage a three-year relationship and resources in five school districts convening district representatives, early care providers, service agencies and other local stakeholders, implementing collaborative strategies and services designed to improve early care and education.

- Funds will enhance efforts to expand its scope and build capacity within each community/district in the region with focus in the seven school districts.

The Blake Foundation was awarded \$25,000 for capacity building in Graham/Greenlee counties to:

- Build awareness of quality early care and education in all of the communities in Graham and Greenlee counties, particularly, remote areas.
- Address the needs of impoverished children and their families in Graham County's communities of Bylas, Bonita, Central, Pima, Safford Solomon and Thatcher.
- Address the needs of impoverished children and their families in Greenlee County's communities of Clifton, Duncan, Morinci and York.
- Graham/Greenlee has a strong commitment to early education and will expand their commitment by identifying and inviting new members to the table based upon their expertise and involvement.

Yavapai County – Yavapai Communities for Young Children was awarded \$25,000 for capacity building to:

- Establish a governing body to increase communication and strengthen the partnership throughout the county.
- YCYC will focus on the quad-city areas of Prescott, Prescott Valley, Chino Valley/Paulden and Dewey-Humboldt/Mayer as well as the Verde Valley of the Yavapai County.